(c) and (d) Yes, Government have strongly taken up the matter of incidents of firing on Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy with the Government of Shri Lanka. The need for the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint and for our fishermen to be treated in a humane manner has been repeatedly emphasised to the Government of Sri Lanka. In response, the Government of Sri Lanka have denied that their Navy ever enters Indian territorial waters and claimed that their Naval ships were not deployed in areas where the incidents occurred.

People of Indian origin in Nepal

3868. SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of People of Indian origin in Nepal and whether they are demanding a separate land from Nepal Government;

(b) whether it is fact that People of Indian origin are given inhuman treatment in Nepal since last six months; and

(c) whether Government intend to send any emissary to discuss this issue with the Nepalese Government;

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The latest census figures of Nepal (2001) do not indicate the size of the population which is of Indian origin. Published census figures contain, *inter alia,* the break-up of the population in terms of districts, mother tongues spoken, and caste/ethnic groups.

Since the end of 2006, there have been agitations by the Madhesi population in the Terai region of Nepal demanding greater political, social and civil rights. These had led to violence and killings. In response, the Government of Nepal have announced their decision to, *inter alia,* delineate electoral constituencies on the basis of equal population, and geographical factors and specificity, and to increase the number of such constituencies in proportion to the population of Madhesis. The Government of Nepal have also invited representatives of the Madhesi groups for a dialogue to address their demands.

(c) The government maintain regular dialogue with Government of Nepal on all issues of bilateral and mutual interest.